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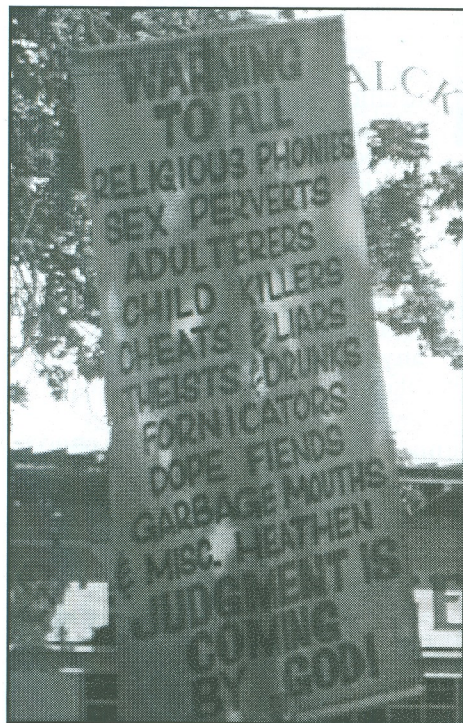
CONCORD

A Journalistic Ministry of Students at Luther Seminary

March 14, 2007

St. Paul, Minnesota

Volume 36, Issue 5



Sharp as a Double-Edged Sword

Conflict and division

Preach It, Brother: The Power of the Word

By Russell Grigsby, Pg. 4

Bearing Our Burdens by Sword and Word

By John Rasmussen, Pg. 7

Silence Is Not the Answer

By Lauren Wendt, Pg. 13

Plus: Taboo topics, March Theology Madness and a kids' look at the best and worst of life at Luther

Letter from the Editor

By **Natalie Gessert**

Concord managing editor

"It's A Small World" tops the "Most Aggravatingly Repetitive Songs" list. Not even Lamb Chop's "Song That Never Ends" could do justice to the frustration wrought by this trite melody. What makes it annoying? What holds the singer hostage to humming it for hours?

The reality is that the message of this song rings sadly untrue. Just turn on your evening news for reports on the latest death toll, both in Iraq and Minneapolis. Platitudes about peace and unity in the face of this danger seem as meaningful as the latest kitschy e-mail forward. There's so much that we share, that it's time we're aware, it's a small world after all? Right.

Many of us spend our days feeling more divided than unified. Our conflicts range from political, ethical and theological differences to serious hatred and relational fallouts. These troubles often make us pause and consider how seriously we can take treaties, unity agreements or even declared forgiveness. They don't appear to be mending relationships or putting an end to the big and little deaths experienced daily. One might even begin taking seriously the notion of an unforgivable sin.

As a friend told me, "In life, we are already in death." We are being killed all day long by one another in attempts to make unity a thing of sight as if we were in a fairy tale rather than in the vestigial mirror of faith. Yet, as any good preacher would remind us, in the midst of death we are already in life. Bonhoeffer opens *Life Together* with Psalm 133:1: "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" And just when you were about to sniff about *your* joyous experience with others at Luther Seminary, he places this unity within the boundaries of common faith in Christ alone. Amid conflicts and war-torn relationships, we are already swallowed up in a new kingdom we do not yet see. The fairy tale of a new kingdom, when all tears will be wiped away, will come true. Jesus promised.

From the Mann Himself

Not About Us: The many uses of conflict

By **John
Martin Mann**

Seminary pastor



In his family systems theory, Murray Bowen argued that perhaps the fundamental tension for all protoplasm is the one between togetherness and separateness or between community and self differentiation. We need both, yet each threatens the other. The balance is uneasy wherever we find it on the continuum between the two.

Conflict is one of the tools we use (more or less successfully) to find a balance between community and self differentiation. The other most frequently used ones are distancing and enmeshment (globbing or herding). Since conflict is the theme of this issue, let's concentrate on conflict.

Conflict is one of the most active levers in managing this tension between togetherness and separateness. It tends to be vivid and get attention. Often however, it is misinterpreted.

Usually, people feel conflict is angry and that it represents an attack upon their person. This is not always accurate. In fact, sometimes it is quite the opposite. Many family members and most clergy can tell stories about experiences of conflict where the intension was not pushing away but drawing in. People who feel ignored often choose conflict to get a reaction and affirm

their relational importance. Even some adolescent use of conflict with parents is an attempt to get attention, not distance.

Having been a student of systems thought for years, I can testify to the difficulty of remembering that conflict is sometimes a cry for my attention and relational time. Moreover, engaging the conflict and seeking resolution often leads to reconciliation or closeness beyond what was true before the conflict. It helps, usually, if the conflict is limited to the issues presented, though that is not always true. In any case, conflict is often more likely to lead to reconciliation than to distancing.

Finally, particularly for church leaders, it is urgent that we recognize that conflict is, more often than not, NOT ABOUT US. Sometimes it is displaced family or work system distress. Sometimes it is the product of the church system dynamics themselves. In my previous parish, at a time of considerable conflict, a sweet shut-in who had been a member there nearly 90 years wisely said this: "Pastor, at the risk of hurting your feelings, this is not about you. We do this to every pastor. I can even tell you who is saying what. It is always the same." I actually laughed out loud. She was right, of course, and it was so much easier to deal with the conflict when I didn't have to own it. It wasn't about me, and when I stopped reacting, it mostly died away.

Conflict is normal, sometimes healthy, seldom fun, but may clarify issues and serve reconciliation.

CONCORD

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Readers are encouraged to interact with the *Concord* in a variety of ways. Articles and "Letters to the Editor" are welcomed, as are less formal responses offered through the online version. All submissions should include the author's name, telephone number and, if applicable, class standing. Submissions should be received in our mailbox in the Olson Campus Center (701); at our office, Gullixson 10; or by e-mail. The managing editor reserves the right to publish, edit, or disregard all submissions.

In Call Process, Remember Who Has Called You

To be Called, Appointed, Placed or a Free Agent?

The December issue of the *Concord* graphically pointed out the ambiguity of the ELCA Call and Candidacy process. All of us at Luther Seminary have heard the horrendous and abusive stories of Candidacy Committees asking inappropriate and barely legal questions — questions which are truly not relevant to the qualifications or Call of a person in ministry. Because we are at an ELCA seminary, we mostly hear the stories of ELCA Candidacy. But as the person who works with all denominational ordination and rostering processes, I can tell you with assurance that NO system of credentialing in the church is without flaws. These systems probably never have been without flaws and they probably never will be. But in this time in history, it does seem to me that the angst of the candidacy process and the arbitrary nature of judicatory committees seem to be more extreme than in the past.

One of the reasons for this is the state of the mainline churches in America. Each mainline denomination in the United States is striving to define itself as a group of Christian witnesses in a fearful, post-Christian context. Each is facing the likelihood of schisms which will result in bad press and feed the fear of churchgoers and the post-Christian attitude of those who check “none” in the religion box on surveys. Each denomination is unsure about where these schisms will come from. Each mainline denomination is sure it will die in the next decade. Each thinks that the solution to the fear and death is to make sure the clergy who represent the denomination are orthodox enough in their particular understanding of doctrine, polity and practice of the faith to keep the structure of the

denomination intact. However, instead of being clear about what the fear is and what the issues are, candidacy committees feel that it is their responsibility to “weed out” those who do not adhere to the sort of orthodoxy which the committee feels is important. Some candidacy committees “get it.” Those are the ones who ask the theological, polity and evangelical questions that determine whether a person is prepared for ministry.

Fear and a genuine, though misdirected, concern for the church drives many candidacy committees, judicatory leaders and even other clergy to ask the wrong questions and judge candidates on the wrong issues. This is happening in all mainline traditions and even in Muslim, Jewish and Roman Catholic faith traditions. Candidates need to be ready to face these fears during candidacy interviews, papers and exams and be sure enough in their Call, theology and faith practices to lead in their candidacy meetings, not knowing everything or being oppositional but being sure they are Called by God and that the Calling comes before any other challenges.

I know that sounds impossible and improbable because it seems like candidacy committees have all the power. But what all Christians believe is that it is God who has the power and that God’s power is made strong in weakness. And it is God who Called you and who continues to affirm that Call. It is ultimately God to whom you will be held accountable. If you allow candidacy committees, judicatory heads or denominational processes to deter you from that Call, then you are not being faithful to the very thing that is at your essence.

Debra Wells

Ecumenical coordinator

The Process Predicament: A View From the ‘Outside’

The Dec. 6 issue of the *Concord* was entitled “The Process.” Those who were around and had a chance to read it may recall that the majority of the issue focused on different aspects of the candidacy process for the M.Div. and rostered M.A. students. All of us at Luther seminary are aware of this process (if you are not, I would question whether or not you have been under a rock for the duration of your time here at seminary). Even those who work in the cafeteria are aware of “the process” — they sense the anxiety of the students when it comes to deadlines for CPE, endorsement and internship applications and placement papers. Yes, we are all aware of “the process,” yet not all of us are in “the process.” I speak as an M.A. student who intends on going into ministry but is not pursuing rostering.

About 40 percent of the students on campus are not M.Div., a good number of whom are not rostering. This includes students intending to do post-graduate work or non-ordained ministry who are not affected by “the process.” We see our peers being concerned about what their candidacy committee will or will not hear about them. It seems like some students tailor what they say in class out of fear that it will get back to their committee. In fact, many even tailor what they say to their committees, hoping to make their time in “the process” as painless as possible. As an M.A. student in the youth ministry program, I intend to work in a church but see no need to be

rostered. Don’t get me wrong, I see the benefits of it. It helps M.Div. students and the larger church. But I desired freedom to choose where to go and knew there is enough demand for youth ministry to negotiate benefits. (Unfortunately, this isn’t the case for all non-ordained positions in ministry.) But it is comforting to know I don’t have to try too hard to find a job.

In a perfect world, the candidacy committees and the ELCA intend to do what is best for students and the church. However, as an outsider of “the process,” I get the feeling that this is not always the case. It seems like many of the rostered students have to do a lot of unnecessary work and writing. I get the feeling that all the essays are made to prove how “Lutheran” they can be. I have also seen some students be ‘burned’ by the process, like when the committee tells a student they do not see gifts of ministry within them. What part of 1 Corinthians 12 do they not understand? Who gave them the 1-800 number to God? Could it be that the function of “the process” can be just as easily served by a secular job placement company? As an insider to the Luther community, but an outsider to “the process,” it seems “the process” is just another bureaucratic machine where those involved try to press the correct buttons just to get through; and to be honest, I think those inside the process would agree.

Marissa Calcaterra

M.A. Senior

Be Careful What You Pray For

From one preacher to another ...

By Russell Grigsby
M.Div. senior

My J-term cross cultural experience took me to inner city Chicago for two weeks of SCUPE (Seminary Consortium for Urban Pastoral Education), where we learned and applied, among other things, Ministry of Presence: “*being Jesus* without *talking Jesus*.” For a group of preachers this was a good challenge, but for me, stimulated an intense desire to preach the name of Jesus — reverse psychology at work?

As I restlessly combed the streets of Chicago asking God to provide one person for me to speak Jesus to, my eyes caught hold of a distant building with a flashing neon cross (straight out the Bible Belt!) that read “Jesus Saves.” Curiosity led me inside the Pacific Garden Mission — one of Chicago’s largest and oldest homeless shelters — where a worship service was already in progress.

I was escorted down a narrow hall by two large gentlemen who thanked me profusely for coming with a *good word*. “Excuse me, you must have me confused with someone else,” I clamored, “I would like to worship with you...actually, I would love it, but I’m not the preacher.” Looking back, I wonder if they were angels, or two jokers having fun with the naïve white boy carrying a big Bible, but whatever the case, they would not take no for an answer, as they continued, “We believe the Spirit has anointed your lips.” Two minutes later, I was standing with my Bible before 600 homeless men. One must be careful what one prays for...prayers are answered.

My mind went blank as I struggled to recall and retell the last sermon I had given. I sensed shifting, whispering and a general lack of attention from my audience. Then, suddenly, I had their undivided attention. What had I done? I had opened my Bible, unleashing the power of God. That alone gave me authority, regardless of any credentials behind my name.



Chicago’s Pacific Garden Mission averages 600-700 guests daily.

God provided a new word, a new message and a new means of delivery as He directed my hands to guide my captive audience through a myriad of seemingly unrelated passages that, lo and behold, came together to fashion a message that two weeks of exegetical preparation could not have matched. I must have stumbled, but they made me feel like I was T.D. Jakes, encouraging me by shouting, “Amen ... preach it, brother!”

God’s external word allowed a privileged, sheltered white boy from racist American suburbia to speak with the same authority as Dr. Martin Luther King would have been granted from this crowd, 99 percent of whom were African-American. That’s the word on the street, and that’s the power of the word.

In the next CONCORD

“Touched by an Angel”? Navigating the edge of **Boundaries**

The favorite clergy buzzword. Somewhere between the red tape and workshops on Saturday morning, you have to wonder: What are we protecting ourselves from? What is out there to guard against? Share your views on boundaries. We promise not to hug you.

Please submit articles by **Tuesday, April 3.**

If interested in being solicited for articles in the future, please send an e-mail to concord@luthersem.edu. Pay rate is \$15 per article with up to 250 words and \$25 per article with more than 250 words.

About the cover photos ...

The Feb. 12 edition of the *Concord* asked you to submit photos from your cross-cultural experiences in J-Term 2007 that reflect this issue’s theme of **Conflict**, with the winning entrant receiving a \$25 prize. Here are the stories behind the resulting cover photos:



“We were at the University of Stellenbosch, in South Africa, during the first week of the semester, which is celebrated like we celebrate homecoming. This picture was taken at the parade during this celebration.”

Submitted by **Katie Fick**, M.Div. junior



“We traveled to South Africa, and this is a picture of the sign outside the Children’s Home and AIDS hospice in the town of George. The irony to me is the warm love, charity and faith we experienced from this organization, contrasted with the cold violence and necessity of surrounding itself by barbed wire.”

Submitted by **Arianna Arends**, M.Div. middler (winning entry)

Christianity Across Cultures

Faith involves different costs, freedoms for Hmong Christians

By Andy Nelson

M.Div. middler

Those of us who took cross-cultural courses this January were asked, as part of our final assignment, to respond to this scenario: someone from your cross-cultural experience has asked you the question, "Why are you a Christian?"

William Siong, pastor of Hmong Central Lutheran Church in St. Paul and our leader in the cross-cultural course on Hmong culture, came to the United States in 1989, speaking no English and leaving behind an impoverished and war-torn Laos — as well as his parents, siblings and former way of life. He graduated from high school and college, converting to Christianity after coming here. Were he to ask me, in the course of conversation, "Why are you a Christian?" I would have to answer like this:

In all honesty, and in stark contrast to you, William, I am a Christian because my parents raised me to be a Christian. Unlike you, William, my Christianity has not cost me the pride and respect of my family or my community — quite the opposite, in fact. It has not threatened me financially, nor has it made me suspect in the eyes of my people or isolated me from them. If anything, it has garnered me respect that I have not earned. I would very much like to believe that, even without my parents' diligence in raising me, I would be a Christian anyway. But, knowing the high value you place on truth, I must acknowledge my uncertainty about this. In many ways, I am a Christian because that it is the easiest thing for me to do.

Having said this, William, and knowing what becoming a Christian has cost you, I must also acknowledge that this is neither a sufficient answer nor, in some ways, even a correct one. To attribute my Christianity to an accident of birth is to minimize the gift that you and I have both been given in our faith, and hence to minimize the cost of that gift to you. Like you, William, I am a Christian because the Holy Spirit has made me a Christian. And when the Spirit catches you, William, I guess you fall down.

You were a captive. You've told us of the curse your family feared: that education would be deadly. You've also told us how Christ freed you from that captivity — from captivity to fear



William Siong, seated center, and students in the January 2007 cross-cultural experience focusing on Hmong culture in St. Paul

and captivity to illiteracy. That freedom, William, is why I am a Christian. Not freedom from the same things exactly, but still, that freedom (my freedom and your freedom), is why I am a Christian.

You've told us also how Christ has cost you in your relationships with clan and family. You've told us how you've been isolated and cut off. But you have also told us of the hopes you have placed in Christ's clan, a family bound by the ties of Jesus' blood, not of ancestors. You have taught us that, for the Hmong, the reality of each individual member of the clan is in a way the reality for the whole clan. When one member of the clan is abused or insulted, the whole clan takes affront. What one member of the clan feels, so do the rest of the members.

Now that I have gotten to know you, William, and now that I know we are members of the same clan — the body of Christ — I can rejoice in your freedom as you can in mine. I can rejoice in the Spirit catching you as you can for me. I can be sorrowful with you in the brokenness of your family and you can sorrow with me when my time for sorrow comes. In a strange and curious way, William, I am a Christian because you are a Christian.

Speak like a Scandinavian

with Arne Braut Non-degree student



From my e-mail: "As a result of the winter weather, the seminary will be closing effective 3:00 pm today and will remain closed on Friday."

Jeg var dessverre i San Francisco for å bli den nye James Dean, med litt hjelp fra The Golden Gate Bridge og en Ford Thunderbird '55.

"Unfortunately, I was in San Francisco to become the new James Dean, supported by the Golden Gate Bridge and a Ford Thunderbird '55."

Unsettling Facts and a Model for the Future

The 2007 Aus lectures in review

By Mark Orf
M.Div. middler

On Feb. 27 and 28, the seminary community was invited to listen to the 29th Annual George Aus Memorial Lectures presented by Patrick Keifert, professor of Systematic Theology.

Gracia Grindal, professor of Rhetoric, introduced this lecture by telling us that the chosen lecturer needs to have a passion about the Gospel of Jesus Christ and evangelizing. She said there have been many people who have come to this lecture from outside the Lutheran community, but this year we have one of our own faculty members. Keifert has studied the missional church for most of his career. He has also written a few books on the subject; *We are Here Now – A New Missional Era* is his latest title. He titled the Aus lectures *Backwards and Forwards: To the basics Evangelism and forming the Christian Community*.

Because I have never had a class taught by Keifert, I had few preconceptions before listening to his lectures. I found that my non-experience was even better for me because after the editor asked me to write this article I found out from talking to people that Keifert seems to either be a prophet for the church or clearly not a prophet for the church. That puts him in a league of some pretty distinguished names on the faculty of Luther Seminary.

On Tuesday morning, Keifert opened by stating that he was going to try and make his lecture as non-controversial as he possibly could. I did not find anything particularly controversial on Tuesday.



Photo courtesy of Communication Office
Patrick Keifert, professor of Systematic Theology, delivers one of this year's Aus lectures in the Chapel of the Incarnation.

Instead, I heard a passion for the information he presented — information that was a little unsettling. A tsunami has hit the church and left wreckage all over the place. Two things stood out to me. First, he cited a study done in the early eighties that said that 75 percent of the pastors in the newly-formed ELCA hated teaching confirmation. If that is anywhere near correct, I worry about the ELCA, because confirmation is where we

offer the confessional teachings of the Lutheran tradition. Second, churches are growing in America, just not most mainline churches. Throughout this lecture, Keifert's passion for the information gave him the appearance of something like a cat. Afterward, I recommended to others that they come and hear the second half of these lectures.

Then I arrived Wednesday, ready to hear Keifert's next lecture. He remained perched on his stool for most of his lecture and I did not recognize the passion from the previous day. I am not sure if it was because he was sitting down and not moving around as he did on Tuesday or because I was expecting to hear a full presentation of a model that can help churches and church leaders evangelize outside the doors of the church, yet only received stories about churches in South Africa. While I really liked the stories about South Africa, there is much more to be said about how to reenergize the church here in the United States.

The passion seemed to return when Keifert got off the stool and shared a story about how we turn our personal Bibles, "My Bible" as he called it, into "an ammunition dump where we get our Bible bullets to shoot at one another." Later he stood to explain what turned out to be the most instructive part of the lecture. For a church to be healthy they need to keep two diametrical poles which see each other as enemies, fully charged. One pole is the "Belongers," who focus on creating loyalty in the church. The other pole is the "Joiners," who focus on creating trust in the church. I needed to contextualize this so I imagined that the "confessional" and "missional" segments of this seminary just may fit the description of being important for the health of the seminary while seeing each other as the enemy. Changing to this view of the context helped me understand Keifert's Belonger-Joiner model more clearly.

Keifert did a good job of presenting some unsettling facts about the church and giving a model that has helped many churches thrive. I recommend that you look them up on the Luther Web site.

FIRST TIME AT SEMINARY

Subject: Strategic Planning Update
To: <faculty@luthersem.edu>,
<students@luthersem.edu>
Friends,
We have been working hard on our Strategic Planning activities. Please review our progress this far [attached] and send us your feedback.
Pax,

ATTACHMENT

2008 Luther Seminary Courses

missional

Greek

Telling the Story

The mission of the triune God I

Early/Medieval Church history

Reading the audience

Preaching and worship for God's mission

missional

and mission

mission

missional

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They Do It For You

God, soldiers and vocation

By John H. G. Rasmussen
M.Th. Student

One of my favorite commentaries on the 9/11 terrorist attacks is a drawing in three panels by one Jeff Grier¹. The first panel looks back to the pre-9/11 panorama of New York harbor with the Twin Towers and the Statue of Liberty silhouetted against the Manhattan skyline.

The second panel confronts us with ground zero in a close-up of the destruction — girders protruding, rocks strewn, a policeman's cap laying on the rubble, and a firefighter up to his waist in the mayhem holding on to the hand of a victim still buried.

The third panel moves to a battlefield — attack aircraft streaking by in formation. An American soldier is stepping into the conflict, his trailing foot still planted in the second panel. The fireman has just released his grip on the American flag that he has been holding, passing the colors to a fellow warrior. The caption reads, "I'll take it from here."

Much could be said about this powerful drawing, but I want to focus on a concept embedded in it that has not perhaps been given the play it should have been given. For as much as the drawing is about heroism, pride, and patriotism, it is even more profoundly about vocation, particularly that of a public servant. As Jean Bethke Elshtain expressed it in a public forum on Just War and Terrorism:

... [P]ublic officials are charged with protecting a people. As those extraordinary firemen in New City said simply, 'It's my job. It's my job.' The same holds for our military ... It's their job. These are our sons and daughters. This is their right authority, or what they do.²

What Elshtain means here, is that what firefighters and soldiers do is not done on their own behalf but on behalf of others.³ Luther would say that they are not acting *in their own person*, but rather, *in their office*. For Lutherans, this distinction goes to the very heart of the concept of vocation.

As a Christian, like it or not, I am embroiled every second of my life in the struggle between good and evil. As we sing in the great hymns, "The old satanic foe has sworn to work us woe,"⁴ we pray that God would "curb those who by deceit or sword would wrest the kingdom from your Son."⁵

In this battle my existence is constituted by two defining



relationships. On the one hand, I stand before God (*coram Deo*) in my own person. Here God alone is active and I trust his justifying word for me on account of Jesus Christ and him crucified. Here, God is the warrior not me. Here, I do nothing. I am not to resist evil. I am to turn the other cheek — to suffer, trust, pray and wait for the final revelation of the Peaceable Kingdom. As Moses said to the children of Israel surrounded by the hosts of Pharaoh at the Red Sea, "The Lord will fight for you, and you have only to be still" (Exodus 14:14).

On the other hand, as I await the coming of God's Kingdom I also stand before my neighbor (*coram hominibus*) in my office, my vocation. By forgiving my sins, delivering me from death and the devil, and granting me eternal salvation in my baptism, God has freed me from every despairing attempt to

bring in the kingdom on my own and turned my gaze from assaulting heaven to tending the earth. Here it is not God that needs my service; it is my neighbor. Here, for the time being, God uses my gifts and relationships as his masks through which he works to hold things together until the end when everything is made right.

That's where the soldier's vocation comes in. The existence of brutality, aggression, and the sorry history of humanity's inhumanity necessitates it and just so establishes it as God's gift and institution. In my own person before God it may be better for me to suffer harm rather than to protect myself by resorting to violence. But is it right for me to make that decision for my neighbor in order to keep my fingers clean? What might Jesus have said if the Good Samaritan had stumbled upon the man in the ditch as the robbers were assaulting him and waited until they were done until he offered aid? Paradoxically, the profession of arms, the use of deadly force, and the waging of just war are sometimes tragic necessities for the protection of my neighbor. As such they fall under the law of love.

Of course soldiering is a risky business, morally as well as physically. In the end, that's what the ancient tradition of Christian just war thinking is all about. Of course soldiering is a risky business, morally as well as physically. In the end, that's what the ancient Christian tradition of just war thinking is all about. It is vital that we be concerned that soldiers and nations fight under legitimate authority (for a just cause and with right intention) and struggle with whether the use of force is proportional and limited and whether it discriminates between combatants and non-combatants. This is what it means to make sure that soldiering remains a matter of vocation instead of vendetta or conquest.

We honor soldiers when we recognize the legitimacy of their vocation as a vehicle for Christian service and an expression of Christian love this side of heaven. So the next time you meet one, you might say "Thank you — thank you for what you do." They don't do it for themselves after all. It's their vocation. They do it for you. And hiding behind them as if they were his mask — is God.

Chaplain Maj. John H. G. Rasmussen

¹ Please see www.illtakeitfromhere.com

² Jean Bethke Elshtain, pewforum.org/events/index.php?EventID=15, The Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, "Just War Tradition and the New War on Terrorism," October 5, 2001, National Press Club, Washington, D.C.

³ There is a double sense in which the phrase "on behalf of others" applies here. First, the firefighters and soldiers act under authority, that is, as representatives of the "We the People" through properly constituted chains of command. Second, they act for the sake of the people, i.e., in service of their neighbors, caring for their needs, coming to their aid, etc.

⁴ Lutheran Book of Worship No. 229

⁵ Lutheran Book of Worship No. 230

‘Though This World, with Devils Filled ...’

By Michael Chan
M.A. junior

A warm summer morning in 1999 welcomed the end of another church service. A low-level buzz hovered over the congregation. The pastor greeted visitors while members scurried off to various volunteer duties. She surveyed the crowd and sighed with weary satisfaction. Suddenly, a shriek broke the low-level buzz like a rock through stained glass. A man fell to the ground and began speaking in a voice not his own. The young pastor found all eyes on her. Seminary had not prepared her for *this*, and a non-ministry job seemed quite appealing right now.

Does this sound like an excerpt from the latest bestseller, *Your Worst Life Now*? Well, truth be told, this scene would have been quite normal for Jesus. In his own words, the casting out of demons was a *sign* of the kingdom’s presence (Matthew 12:28). Jesus puts it conditionally, “*If* it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, *then* the kingdom of God has come to you.”

Demons are mentioned more than 60

times in the Gospels. The writers attach uncomfortable verbs to these spirits. Demons speak, inflict illness and throw people down. But verbs associated with Jesus’ dealings with demons exhibit a power all their own. Jesus casts out, commands, heals and rebukes.

Even Luther’s words carry the scent of such battle:

And though this world, with devils filled,
should threaten to undo us,
We will not fear, for God hath willed
His truth to triumph *through us*:
The Prince of Darkness grim,
we tremble not for him;
His rage we can endure, for lo, his
doom is sure,
One little word shall fell him.

God has indeed won the victory, but the language of partnership accents this hymn. His truth will triumph *through us*. Furthermore, who is to speak the Word of God that fells the devil? We are!

All over the world, Christians whose loyalties span denominational lines are engaging in spiritual warfare. It is our challenge at Luther Seminary to examine

this in light of the witness of scripture and appropriate it into our praxis. It is messy, inconvenient and undignified. On the other hand, what ramifications lie in the wake of neglect? Are we willing to engage in such spiritual malpractice? Perhaps the devil’s greatest tactic is to convince us that he is not there!

These deeply spiritual questions are best answered analogically. To neglect spiritual warfare as a regular ministry practice is to lead God’s sheep to cool waters yet take no measures to ensure their safety from encroaching wolves. By the way, the wolves are guaranteed (1 Peter 5:8)! Perhaps our metaphor of “minister as shepherd” is too romantic and tame and conditions us to respond domestically when the threat is aggressively demonic. Spiritual pacifism is a dangerous option.

The ramifications of neglect and malpractice are catastrophic and terrible at best. Such malpractice results in congregants and pastors who are able to “submit to God,” yet lack the tools to “resist the devil” (James 4:7). The need is present, the enemy is dark, but the victory is sure!

Possession, Prayer, and the Power of God

By Faith K. Lugazia
Ph.D. student

Healing that restores a possessed person takes place in three different ways: first, through applying available medicine to cure the disease; second, through psychotherapy; and thirdly, through prayer called faith-healing. Before practicing healing, it is very important for a minister to diagnose the nature of the disease.

A person possessed by a demon neither looks different in outward appearance nor has any sign showing that there is a demon in her or him. Since a demon enters a person inexplicably, physical methods like medicine or psychotherapy cannot be applied in bringing such a person to health. Prayers of exorcism are a healing way for people with such problems.

My first experience of meeting a demon-possessed person was at the youth gathering in Tanzania in 1986. I

had never believed in demon possession in my life of faith. My unbelief in it grew out of the question I kept asking myself: “Where and how can a demon enter into a human body?” In 1986, I personally witnessed a demon-possessed person, and this changed my unbelief.

The incident went like this: During the gathering, a high school student asked me (a theologian) to pray for her. I called my friends to pray with me. As we were praying, that high school girl fell down, stretched her legs and started shouting, asking someone to leave her. Her words made some of us open our eyes. A friend of mine who was a nurse and had experienced demon possession said, “She is possessed by a demon.” She then announced, “Now we are going to pray for exorcism; if you are saved, remain and pray with us; for you who are not, leave this place because the demon after leaving this girl might enter you.” The announcement by the nurse made me worried. As one who did not believe

in demon possession, I asked myself, *AM I really saved?* I wanted to leave the room, but then I said to myself, “I’m the one entrusted by others, and I will be meeting such things in my ministry.” I decided to stay, and that time my prayer changed. Instead of praying for the girl, I prayed to God that now I believe and please let not this demon come to me. Some of us who remained inside the room continued to pray together, and the demon left that girl.

From then on, I used to meet people with such problems in my ministry. Some through prayers were helped; some were not. A demon is an evil power which existed from Biblical times and still exists today. What a minister needs to know is the fact that the possessed need healing. Our vocation, therefore, reminds us that we not only need to be equipped to tell people what to do in the *Missio Dei* but also need to be equipped with skills regarding how God’s community can be as healthy as it is supposed to be.

War of the World

Meeting the Old Foe again, for the first time

By Walter Sundberg
Professor of Church History

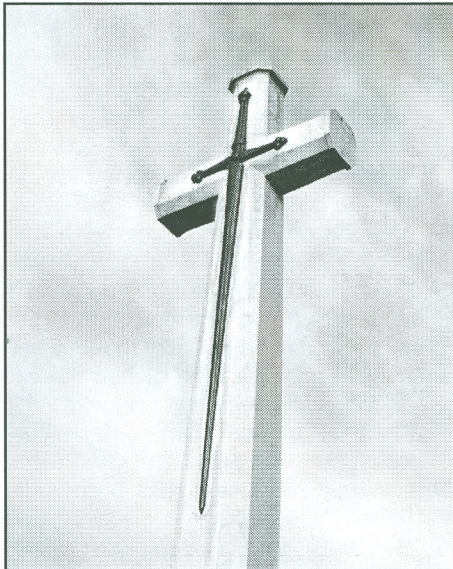
The editor asked me to write briefly on the topic of "spiritual warfare." This is a category of Christian experience and reflection that is treated suspiciously in mainline denominations. To get a working definition I Googled an evangelical Web site:

'Spiritual warfare' is the struggle to have life in this material world reflect as much as possible God's loving governance. It is a 'war' because there are forces working vigorously to thwart God's work. God is in charge, but there is an enemy that is in full-scale revolt, and it has powerful influence all around. As with the unseen God, the forces behind the revolt are unseen, non-physical, and supernatural. They lust after power in the world of visible, material beings. Just because the battle is unseen doesn't mean it isn't going on. It is: In every nook and cranny of our earthly existence. (www.spirithome.com/spirwarf.html)

The classic biblical reference for this understanding is Ephesians 6.12: "For our struggle is not against enemies of blood and flesh, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places."

One would think that of all mainliners, Lutherans would have at least some sympathy and sense of familiarity with the concept of spiritual warfare since we teach that Christian life is a desperate existence in the midst of war. Our redoubt is God Almighty. We retreat behind the holy walls of his protection pursued by our Ancient Foe who has no equal on earth: "Satan is his name, that is, adversary. He must obstruct and cause misfortune; he cannot do otherwise. Moreover, he is the prince and god of this world, so that he has sufficient power to do so" (LW 37, 17). The counterattack is led by our ever-young general and Corp commander who is Jesus Christ, Lord Sabaoth. His

Our only comfort is that our General fights beside us upon the plain. We stand defiant under attack, and, as the pipes play, we sing against the advancing foe with the bravado of a soldier ...



mission is beyond our capacity to fulfill by ourselves because the entire world is filled with demons. They are at our front, our back and both flanks. Our weapon system consists solely of the Word of God. In this war of terror, the civilian population is not protected by the conventional rules of civilized combat: "In all grave illnesses the Devil is present as the author and cause ... [and] he is the author of death" (LW 54, 53).

Our only comfort is that our General fights beside us upon the plain. We stand defiant under attack, and, as the pipes play, we sing against the advancing foe with the bravado of a soldier:

And take they our life,
Goods, fame, child and wife,
Let these all be gone,
They yet have nothing won;
The Kingdom ours remaineth.

You know the tune.

Now as to the meaning of this all, what are we to say? Is this hymn simply an exercise in poetic imagination? Edgar Carlson, long time President of Gustavus Adolphus College, with whom I had the privilege to teach as a young

instructor at Luther Seminary, has this to say: "The conflict between God and the Devil is basically a conflict between faith and unbelief in the human soul; it is not a mythological conflict" (*The Reinterpretation of Luther*, Westminster Press, 1948, p. 50). And Heiko Oberman, premier Luther scholar of his generation, makes this judgment, which is also a warning to mainliners who often operate on the basis of twin assumptions: rationalism and psychologism: *The Reformation symbol of Christ's presence is not the halo of the saint, but the hatred of the Devil*.

Transforming Luther into the forerunner of enlightenment means dismissing this warning of the Devil's growing superiority as a remnant of the Dark Ages. But that would deprive Luther's life of the experience of the Devil's power, which affected him as intensely as Christ's. Take away the Devil and we are left with the Protestant citadel, the "better self," the conscience, which thus becomes the site of the Last Judgment, where the believer confronted with the laws of God, acknowledges that he is a sinner and declares himself at the same time to be righteous by virtue of Christ's sacrifice.

It is precisely this conventional, conscience-oriented morality that man's innermost self struggles to fulfill, and that Luther, to the horror of all well-meaning, decent Christians, undermined. The issue is not morality or immorality, it is God and the Devil. The two great turning points of the Reformation age, the Lutheran and the Copernican, seem to have brought mankind nothing but humiliation. First man is robbed of his power over himself, and then he is pushed to the periphery of creation (*Luther: Man between God and the Devil*, Yale, 1989, p. 155).

The interpretation of these two distinguished scholars regarding Luther has great ecumenical potential. With both Carlson and Oberman, I am sure Billy Graham would agree.

The environment and your health

By Jesse Christopherson

M.Div. middler

I bet you think you're pretty up-to-date on all this environmental stuff, don't you? I bet you recycle your cans, bottles, newspapers and sermons, drive a fuel-efficient car and even buy that expensive organic peanut butter every once in a while. Great job! Unfortunately for you and your Honda Civic, the trend of global warming continues.¹ If you browse the world news, you will see monthly reports of Arctic and Antarctic ice shelves breaking off, new animal and plant species joining the endangered list due to habitat loss and concern by meteorologists and aid agencies that the number of catastrophic storms will continue to increase. But you ask, "What does this have to do with 'health,' and, moreover, to do with me?"

Aside from the direct effects of rising global temperatures and depletion of natural resources, there are other indirect effects of a sick earth. As J. Andrew Kirk writes:

The strain on the environment is clearly related to matters of economic and political justice. Deforestation, intense agricultural practices, overgrazing, soil erosion, the greenhouse effect on the climate and many forms of pollution are the direct result of current economic relations between rich and poor nations. Situations of violence can arise because of the deterioration or disappearance of land suitable for sustaining human communities.²

What our communities do affects our habitat, which affects our communities. Our personal, societal and communal health is directly linked to how we treat the creation God has given us to steward.

Then God said, "Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth." (Genesis 1:26)

As Christians, it's our responsibility to protect and preserve what God has given us charge over. That means making good use of the resources God has provided and

spreading them out for creation's citizens.

Now you're wondering, "But what can I do about it? It's the industries that are releasing all those toxins into the air!" Much of particulate carbon emissions into the atmosphere can be attributed to industrial sources. But these "industries" are simply doing what you want them to. They are making the products you purchase. In order to limit the release of both industrial and domestic sources of carbon emissions, our communities need to change how they practice healthy living. One of the biggest and most often overlooked sources of air pollution and resource consumption comes straight out of our homes' walls: electricity.

Electricity doesn't come out of the ground like other sources of energy; it's created from other sources. This may come in the form of solar, wind or water power but most often comes sources like coal. About 92 percent of the coal mined in the United States is used for generating electricity, and 50 percent of all U.S. power plants run on coal.³ Coal generates large amounts of carbon dioxide, and inefficient furnaces and boilers also release un-combusted particulate matter (the stuff that doesn't get burned) and heavy metals (which are carcinogens and sources of acid rain). So, as you can see, it's in your best interest to limit the amount of electricity you use. But how do we do this? Here are six easy steps to take at home:

1. Unplug electronics from the wall when you're not using them: Display clocks and LEDs use energy even when your VCR/microwave/cell phone charger is not on.
2. Use less hot water: Hot water heaters use electricity.
3. Turn your thermostat down in the winter and up in the summer.
4. Replace regular incandescent light bulbs with a compact fluorescent bulbs. They use 60 percent less energy.
5. Recycle and buy recycled products: Making recycled products generally uses 70-90 percent of the energy required to make new products.
6. Turn your lights off when you're not in a room and when you're not home.^{4 5}

So please, be a good creature, and help protect what God has given us — for our health and for the health of future generations.

³ Department of Energy, Kid's Page, www.eia.doe.gov/kids/energyfacts/sources/non-renewable/coal.html

⁴ An Inconvenient Truth Web site, www.climatecrisis.net/takeaction/whatyoucando/index.html

⁵ Ahem, Colin. *cough*

Extra! Extra!

Get news in the OCC

By Matt Metevelis

M.Div. middler

Karl Barth famously quipped that a good theologian has a Bible in one hand and the day's newspaper in the other. Last December's invasion of daily newspapers in the Olson Campus Center has brought the campus closer to realizing Barth's ideal. The *Pioneer Press*, *USA Today* and *The New York Times* are available in a miniature news stand outside the cafeteria. M.Div. junior and Student Council Vice President Tim Wrenn pioneered and did the hard work of leading the newspaper program to "increase educational opportunities for students on campus."

Tim has been pleased that the response has been largely positive from students and faculty. Students take lots of papers every day. M.Div. middler Bob Bekkerus is excited about "three crossword puzzles and a connection to local sports." The newspapers often provoke conversations on campus about the connection between the theology learned in the classroom and current events. Professors are often seen grabbing a morning *Pioneer Press* or *New York Times* after chapel or on their way to class.

However, the program is relatively new and its novelty might wear off. Aside from the extra clutter in the lunch room, there are many concerns. Don Lewis, vice president for Administration and Finance, thinks the program is good but is worried that over time the enthusiasm will die out and "the papers will just sit there." Lewis talked reasonably about the ubiquity of news sources in our information society and said, "If students don't use the papers we should put that money somewhere else." Judging from the empty racks, the program is safe for now.

Evangelism in the Passive-Aggressive Church

By Kevin Bergeson
M.Div. senior

I spent this last week at Willow Creek, one of America's flagship Mega churches. Willow Creek has an amazing story. Staying with a gracious host family from Atonement Lutheran in Barrington, Ill., I was still shocked at the size of Willow. It's the size of a small community college, and walking in, was amazed at the beehive of volunteers and the indoor waterfall. So, this was the church everyone has been talking about? The Willow Creek association boasts 11,000 member churches, each paying \$249 a year for discounts on resources and conferences. This conference on Student Ministries was full of music, speakers and breakout sessions. I immediately made friends with a great group of urban, Pentecostal, surfer-types from San Diego and we did our meals together.

The worship was amazing. It bothers me when I go to "classic" contemporary in Lutheran churches and am I barked at to clap. Have you ever seen a bunch of "frozen chosen" keep a beat? Ay yi yi. The band at Willow incorporated elements of gospel, hip-hop, Latin (including singing in Spanish), and straight-ahead rock. It did not feel forced to clap; I tried to anyway. The room was joyful and encouraging. The worship leaders even wore albs (just kidding). Efrem Smith from Minneapolis closed the service with a rip-roaring, gospel-preaching, sidesplitting message about the Incarnation. Yes, Willow is one slick production with a bookstore, food court and reputation. Yet, Willow started with the Story of Jesus Christ presented in a local movie theater.

Evangelism for Lutherans is nil, because Lutherans are good at taking care of their own. We do amazing outreach through Lutheran World Relief and some urban ministries

reaching cities, to name just two. Yet where we are the biggest and the whitest, we are turned inward on ourselves. The more we grow concerned with our shrinking numbers and the ramifications of a history in the United States consisting of ethnic mergers and common missions, the more we forget to look outside to see what's happening. Lutheranism in America is faithfully boring. *Oh, Kevin*, why be so sweeping? Go read about Henry Melchior Muhlenberg, that guy was a rock star. Muhlenberg has left the building and has been replaced with passive-aggressive politicians. But I have found the cure-all for the Lutheran evangelism problem. I stole the idea from author Donald Miller, Lutheranized it, and reshaped it a bit. Oh wait, I'd call it a "re-find."

People are not connecting with the Church (Lutherans, ha!), because the Church has lost its ability to share the largest, most compelling Story: what God has done in Jesus Christ and God at work in the world. People want to find themselves in a larger story, a story that has meaning, purpose and promise. Willow Creek has articulated the Story powerfully, so people come. While every presentation of the Story needs to have serious theological critique, why do we not do that with our "proclamation?" We shoot down decision theology, but why are we not concerned with being indicted for failing to "go and *make* disciples of all nations?" Look at the city of St. Paul, the nations have come to us! Lutherans get all excited about vocation, but parcel it to theological study. Vocation is evangelism! Helping another child of God see that they belong in God's story, that God loves them, transforms them daily, and calls them is powerfully presenting the Story. In fact, God could use someone like them; no, God will *use* them. Then, step back and let the Holy Spirit do what we cannot: create faith.

To Seniors: A Letter from the Western Front

By Daniel Disch
M.Div. alumnus

Dear future alumni and ordinands: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord, Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 1:3). I write to you, seniors, knowing that most of you have been assigned and are still wracked with the aberrant sob, sigh, or yippee. Or perhaps you're marking time to finish those pesky credits this summer and awaiting winter assignment like Calvin and Hobbes praying to the snow gods. You are in the midst of post-internship and pre-whatnot, with faculty and staff seeming a bit smaller now, the campus a bit foreign and spring semester a bit long. Or you are among the utterly unclassifiable students who will be thinking about your first call at the end of a seven-year

plan. I am not unsympathetic. In fact, I am writing from your future, from the front if you will; a new-car-smell parish pastor finished with the first year of first call. I've been paroled a year, serving a solo call at a church in western Montana and I wish to share some encouragement and personal experience. I know one year doth not a keynote speaker make. But once again, I was there and wish you grace and peace.

In my first year of first call, green as grass, I returned to living with my wife, an unrestricted assignment to the synod through which I was a candidate, an open call thirty minutes from my house and the birth of our first child. While it would be insulting to the complexities of who God is calling into the vineyard for harvest this year to make such statements universal, there are two

constants I have seen: God's abundant provision and surprising firsts. Many of you may not wish to be moving box-free, easy-commuting, in-the-family-way church leaders. Some may even be coming up with their own dismaying acronyms for Iowa (or other places ending in "a"). It's frightening to think your debt, sacrifices and growing trust in a vague call to ministry have been in the hands of others. The fortunes of spouses, children and boy/girlfriends must adhere "yes" or "no" to a community. If "no," then an uncertain "when" or "if" there will be a chance to say anything more. If "yes," the leap of faith propels you to Our Savior's-Christ the King-Emmanuel-St. Paul-Our Redeemer's-Atonement Lutheran and rolls you

Continued on Pg. 12

Let There Be ...

What happens when God speaks

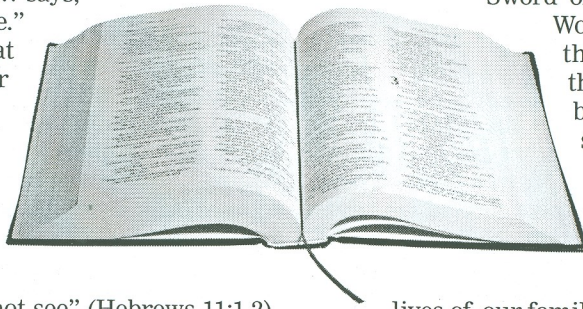
By Fantahun Beerarra
M.A. junior plus

What can words accomplish? Anything? Are they just empty sounds that we utter? What does the Word of God do to us and for us?

Our words, which could be of great value in the Spirit, emanate from what we have heard, learned, manipulated and created. What we say to or hear from God, other people and demons can affect us negatively or positively. Hearers may also be affected the same way. Proverbs 23:7 says, "For as he thinks in his heart, so is he." This is not only about becoming what we say but about determining our destiny.

Many believers think the word of God creates faith upon all hearers indiscriminately, but technically, it is not the Word of God that creates faith but hearing it in the Spirit. "Faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see" (Hebrews 11:1-2). Words are confessions, and we have no word better than the Word of the Lord to confess and proclaim, for the Lord will do to us in accordance to our confession. The LORD said to Moses, "This very thing that you have spoken I will do" (Exodus 33:17). Confess a good word, good will happen to you; confess derogatory words about yourself, the same will happen to you.

Today's educational institutions train us to attain our goals, not through prayer and meditation on the Word, but by academic exercise and accumulation of knowledge alone. This



neglects the fact that our "becoming" is far more important to God than our gaining authority, which would be ours once we begin to trust in Him. By not believing Him, we believe the contrary of what we needed to believe in the first place. Then, what God does in His love for us looks hateful against us. God's freedom becomes slavery and what is bondage in His sight looks liberty. Confusion settles in our spirit as happened to the Israelites in the wilderness. (Deuteronomy 1:27, 31-32).

God creates, comforts, builds, or rebukes by His Word. He also fights and destroys enemies by His Word, which is the Sword of the Spirit (Revelation 2:15-16). His Word is a Hammer that crushes, Fire that burns dross and purifies, Water that washes and cleanses, Wind that blows away the chaff, and a Quake that shakes stony hearts. His Word does not come void but accomplishes what it was sent to do (Isaiah 55:11).

Thinking aright and meditating upon the Word of the Lord is crucial to our health, wealth, wisdom, the lives of our families and the community at large, since all dearly depend upon our words. We carry power of life and death in our tongue. Words glorify the Lord or lordify the flesh. We become what we think. The Bible says that as a man "thinks in his heart, so is he." It is no wonder why David said "May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, O LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer" (Psalm 19:14). Let us confess the Word of the Lord. God will give us our inheritance in the here and now in accordance to what we believe and hence speak.

To Seniors: A Letter from the Western Front

Continued from Pg. 11

through ordination, installation and first dinner invitations. Suddenly your office is quiet and you're trying to find the light switch and someone calls wanting to speak to "pastor" (who, me?). No more "right" answers, or "one time on internship" stories, but the Good News of our good Lord Jesus, your lack of administration skills and a looming council meeting. Oh yeah, baby.

Like fatherhood, this vocation is on-the-job training. I am not wise yet (Mark 9:24). In this first year I have easily and frequently fallen into Luther's famous sin, which von Staupitz identified as not trusting that Christ was his Savior and could take care of his crap. Certainly, there are moments of disappointment, loneliness, lack of personal fulfillment, disillusionment and incompetence that make me feel like it's really about my "pastoral identity" (*opinio legis*, anyone?). But, as a mentor of mine once said, "There's only one Savior, and you're not him."

It turns out Jesus is my Savior, too, and called this particular congregation into being before I got there. It turns out that Jesus is constantly working to free even the pastor from his bondage;

from his Lazarus sleep. An 82-year-old shut-in reminded me of this when chatting about a devotion. "Pastor, don't you think people try too hard to make everyone happy? I mean, Jesus came to earth and couldn't make them all happy. He did the best he could for them, and look what happened to him."

I seem to be called by a God of provision as an on-the-job stumbler, for the people to whom I am called, with who I am right now. Trite? Yes, I suppose. But how else can I explain the tradition of starting the new church year by hiking with people twice your age to the top of an 8,000-foot peak and an 82-year-old who brings new life *to you*? How else do I tell you, who are waiting, eager, deflated and inflated, about the ambushing God who meets you in the ICU in tearful hope, of the parents of a 16 year old, the significance of Elk hunting or event planning? I guess those that have no leg to stand on before God except Christ just do it, called by the One who has searched you out and known you too (Psalm 139).

P.S. When I was in Iowa, our favorite was: I Owe the World an Apology (Go Norse!). Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Gay and Lesbian Ordination: It's Time to Talk

Trial and verdict make campus conversation more important than ever

By Lauren Wendt

M.A. junior

"Ordained ministers who are homosexual in their self-understanding are expected to abstain from homosexual sexual relationships."

— Vision and Expectations —
Ordained Ministers in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Vision and Expectations. Most students have read it. The question now is simple: Why aren't we talking about it? While the sexuality issue buzzes throughout the ELCA's congregations and synods, the Luther Seminary community remains strangely mute.

This winter, the verdict in the trial of the Rev. Bradley Schmeling, openly gay ELCA pastor serving St. John's Lutheran Church in Atlanta, compels this diverse Luther community, as current and future leaders in the ELCA and other denominations, to educate ourselves and to speak.

The Trial

According to the Disciplinary Hearing Committee's report, "On August 8, 2006, Bishop Ronald B. Warren of the Southeastern Synod filed charges against Pastor Bradley E. Schmeling, accusing him of engaging in a pattern of conduct incompatible with the ministerial office in that Pastor Schmeling persisted in an active homosexual relationship." This action was taken after Pastor Bradley refused Warren's request that he resign from the roster after disclosing to Bishop Warren that he had found a life partner. As a result, the ELCA convened a hearing committee, which then met from Jan. 19-24, 2007. At the closed trial, Pastor Schmeling, St. John's members, teaching theologians, Bishop Warren and others testified to determine if Pastor Schmeling was in violation of the ELCA's policies.

The Verdict

On Feb. 8, 2007, the Discipline Hearing Committee (DHC) reported its near unanimity that, absent paragraph b(4) of Definitions and Guidelines (D&G), "there is nothing about Pastor Schmeling's acknowledged and

NEXT STEPS

➤ To read the original and complete determination of the Discipline Hearing Committee, visit the Web site of St. John's Lutheran Church in Atlanta: www.stjohnsatlanta.org/trialupdate.html.

➤ For an on-campus discussion on Sexuality and the Bible, join David Fredrickson, professor of New Testament, in the Auxiliary Dining Room on March 28 from noon to 1:30 p.m.

stipulated homosexual relationship that would impede the proclamation of the gospel or the right administration of the sacraments," and that, absent the specific requirements of D&G, "Pastor Schmeling is not engaged in conduct that is incompatible with the ministerial office, and would find with near unanimity that no discipline of any sort should be imposed against him." The DHC expressed near-unanimous concern that D&G and V&E on this subject are "at least bad policy, and may very well violate the constitution and bylaws of this church."

The DHC decision further included the following suggestions to the assemblies of ELCA synods and to the ELCA Churchwide Assembly:

➤ "Reconsider and revise 'Definitions and Guidelines,' removing language that specifically precludes practicing homosexuals from the ordained ministry"

➤ "Reconsider and revise 'Vision and Expectations,' removing specific prohibitions against homosexual sexual relationships"

➤ "Reconsider and revise the policy on reinstatement to the ELCA clergy and professional lay rosters to permit immediate reinstatement of persons who have resigned or have been removed from the rosters of the ELCA solely because they entered into a loving, lifelong partnership with another person of the same sex that is mutual, chaste and faithful. Normally people who seek

reinstatement to the official rosters must wait at least five years." (ELCA News Service, Feb. 8, 2007)

At the same time, "determined to be faithful to their call and charge," the DHC (7-5) removed Pastor Schmeling "from the clergy roster of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, effective August 15, 2007."

The Impact

Based on the verdict of this hearing, individuals are presenting memorials at ELCA synod assemblies nationwide to propose three memorials for consideration at the 2007 Churchwide Assembly Aug. 6-12 in Chicago. The memorials are:

1. To follow the recommendations of the Discipline Hearing Committee, amending bylaws precluding homosexuals in relationships to engage in active ministry and reinstating all previously removed from the roster for their engagement in a homosexual relationship.

2. To encourage church leadership to refrain from disciplining candidates for rostered service on the sole basis of their involvement in a same-gender relationship.

3. To encourage church leadership to exercise restraint in disciplining rostered church leaders and those seeing a rostered call on the sole basis of their involvement in a same-gender relationship.

The Luther Community Must Speak

As we bury ourselves in snow, papers and textbooks, the conversation flowing throughout the ELCA cannot continue to go unspoken on this campus. Our community's great diversity of theological perspectives and backgrounds reflects the broader church which we are called to serve, yet our diversity means nothing if we are too afraid to engage in meaningful dialogue with each other.

The information is at your fingertips; the conversation awaits. There is no more important time than now. Speak, Luther Seminary, speak.

Lauren Wendt is a junior masters in urban ministries student pursuing ELCA candidacy in diaconal

The Sweet Sound of Speculation

'Love Vigilantes'

By Jeni Falkman
M.Div. middler

A band formed in the ashes of Joy Division, New Order was a popular English Rock band in the 1980s. Both bands were known for post-punk, synthesized dance music; they have been influential in today's alternative and dance genres of music. I came to New Order through the cover "Vigilante" by Iron & Wine. Iron & Wine is the name of the Sub Pop artist Sam Beam. Beam sings Southern roots music and does not seem like a natural choice to cover a New Order song ("Love Vigilantes"), but Beam's record of translating synthetic music into visceral, earthy tunes is near perfect. In a musically cyclical fashion and with beautifully whispered vocals, Beam retells a common story.

New Order and Beam provide an interesting and oft overlooked aspect to the reach of war: the trauma of family life. The issue at stake isn't a soldier's vocation; the lyrics do not lend to conscientious objection. The issue isn't the tendency to justify wars in the name of God, though the lyrics facetiously do. The issue at stake is the family. What God has joined together, let no one separate (Matthew 19:6b).

Beyers Naudé, an Afrikaner pastor in South Africa in the 1940s and '50s, was a man who, by all conventions, should have eschewed resistance to Apartheid. He was a member of the Broederbond, the secret league of Afrikaner brothers that sought to forever codify the reaches of Apartheid: white supremacy at the cost of black subjugation. Naudé could have rested in the bivouac of Apartheid and the power of his owed National Party. However, he was faced with a metanoia.

Naudé witnessed the destruction of black families under the South African migrant labor system: Men were sent off to work in the mine, laboring over diamonds they would never own, hundreds of miles from their families, living in dire conditions; it was common for men to fulfill their intimate needs in the arms of strangers. Women were sent to work in the homes of the whites, often becoming the mothers of other children; children were often left with extended family members and sometimes left to fend for themselves.

Naudé's metanoia or conversion culminated in the Sharpeville Massacre, whose anniversary comes next week. On March 21, 1960 an act of civil action met governmental over-reaction when people organized to burn their pass books,

which had to contain stamps providing official proof that allowed a black to be in one town or another. Basically, blacks had to carry a passport to travel around in their own country. A shot was fired and what was a peaceful act of civil disobedience quickly became a massacre. When the smoke cleared, 69 people had been shot and killed, mostly from the back and the side; most of the protestors were running away from the guns that killed them. This event shook Naudé; he could no longer accept Apartheid. Because of the detriment to life, especially at the familial level, resistance was necessary.

Resistance is an unfortunate yet necessary aspect of life East of Eden. How can it not be? Sin abounds, evil is ever-present and there must be an avenue of resistance. To be precise, resistance comprises of many levels—violent though preferably non-violent—and serves the tele of reconciliation and peace.

What of the inverse? What of ceasing resistance in order to preserve family life? At what point, though, does resistance stop being a life-giving and chaos-ordering and begin to be life-taking and chaos-making?

Almost 50 years later, we are faced with the fourth anniversary of the war in Iraq. In a war that was started in order to protect our families and save families in Iraq, families are being torn apart. Many troops are on their second or third tour of duty, separated from their families, injured and too often killed in the line of duty. The effects are also felt at home:

"Since my husband has been gone, I have potty-trained two kids, my oldest started preschool, a kid learned to walk and talk, plus the baby is not sleeping that well," said Lori Jorgenson, 30, whose husband, a captain in the Minnesota National Guard, has been deployed since November 2005 and recently had his tour extended another four months. "I am very burnt out."

...At home, spouses say, they try to keep their young children connected to their deployed parents.... She buys them surprise gifts from their father, like boxes of Fruity Pebbles or camouflage sheets. Meanwhile, she thinks, "Will I ever get through bath time and get them to bed without screaming and losing my patience?"

(Lizette Alvarez, "Long Iraq Tours Can Make Home a Trying Front," The New York Times, Feb. 23, 2007)

Sadly, we can't even empathetically scratch the surface of the plight of the Iraqi families, who have, to a much larger extent at least numerically, been torn asunder or separated. All we have is a number: about 650,000 (see the report from The Lancet, a British medical journal).

What necessitated South African resistance to Apartheid? What necessitates our reevaluation of the current war in Iraq? Its treatment of the family structure that so binds and propels society forward. What God has joined, let no one separate.

Oh I've just come from the land of the sun
From a war that must be won in the name of truth
With our soldiers so brave, your freedom we will save
With our rifles and grenades and some help from God.

I want to see my family, my wife and child waiting for me
I've got to go home, I've been so alone you see.

You just can't believe the joy I did receive
When I finally got my leave and I was going home
Oh I flew through the sky, my convictions could not hide
For my country I would die and I will see it soon.

I want to see my family, my wife and child waiting for me
I've got to go home, I've been so alone you see.

When I walked through the door my wife she laid upon the floor
And with tears her eyes were sore I did not know why
Then I looked into her hand and I saw the telegram
That said I was a brave, brave man but that I was dead.

I want to see my family, my wife and child waiting for me
I've got to go home, I've been so alone you see.

Ask the Magic 8-Ball!

Real theological answers from the ball that knows all

Can't we all just get along?
"Very doubtful"



Eat Your Way Through the Twin Cities

SIGNATURE CAFE

130 E Warwick St., Minneapolis
(612) 378-0237
www.signaturecafe.net

By Laura Ruth Wilkinson

M.A. senior

Tony, the proprietor of Signature Cafe, tells me that President Bliese is a regular at the establishment; clearly, President Bliese has good taste.

The cafe's menu, while not long, is diverse. Appetizers include calamari, which comes with delicious sun-dried tomato aioli, and an artichoke/cheese concoction that caused me to ask myself why I don't eat artichoke/cheese concoctions more often.

My party and I sampled a number of main-course dishes, and the prosciutto and Serrano ham accoutrements made me so glad I'm not Jewish or Muslim. The duck was tender, but its accompanying mashed sweet potatoes were a touch on the cold side. The highlight of the main-course menu was the catch of the day, a pan-seared, light and flaky fish with potato and asparagus appurtenances.

Not being able to decide which desserts to try, we simply ordered them all, and we consumed every last bite. As one of my associates said, "I started eating and didn't want to stop, it was so good." The almond marzipan torte is particularly delectable.

The head chef, Nathalie, came out and spoke to us a few times over the course of the meal. She was baptized in the LCA and confirmed in the ALC, so she's good people. The ambiance at Signature Cafe is terrific: soft lighting, jazzy music, comfortable chairs and friendly employees. And the napkins were really nice: not quite cloth, but so much more than a paper towel. Perfect for wiping one's mouths after a delicious meal.

Up Next:

Psycho Suzi's Motor Lounge

2519 Marshall St. NE, Minneapolis
Hosted by Liz Olson & Tom Albright
Saturday, March 24; 6 p.m. Meet at venue.

Concord Events Calendar

By Anna Marsh

M.A. senior

Last Thursday, March 8, was International Women's Day. It started with a labor protest in New York City in 1857. In 1987, Congress voted to make March Women's History Month (Hey, 130 years later is better than never!). Though the political importance of the day in the United States has been lost over time (which would you rather have: flowers ... or civil rights?) it is still honored in many former Soviet republics, South Africa and India with a national celebration. In our area, try these events:

► **March 24: *Heroes: Women Who Changed History and Changed Our Lives*.** Celebrate the women, well-known and little-known, who came before us through storytelling, music and performances. Fitzgerald Theatre, 8 p.m. Tickets start at \$20.

► **March 29-April 7:** Naughty girls, material girls, hollaback girls, just-wanna-have-fun girls, American women, natural women (hear them roar!). See *Where the Girls Are: A Musical Celebration of American Women* at the new Lowry Lab Theatre for a study of women's rights, roles and icons via pop music.

► **March 9-April 1:** A stage adaptation of Chaim Potok's novel about friendship transcending religious differences, *The Chosen*, plays at the Park Square Theatre. See www.parksquaretheatre.org for tickets and showtimes.

► **March 15: *A Wine Affair*** at the St. Anthony Main Events Center. A little costly (\$30), but it's a small price to pay for sophistication. This month focuses on wines from the Rhone region of France. More info, future menus and tickets at www.awineaffair.net.

► **March 17:** St. Patrick's Day falls on a Saturday this year. The Saturday before Reading Days, to be exact.

► **March 19:** We are entering the fifth year of the war in Iraq. Politics (but not faith) aside, pay your respects to the human cost of this struggle. See *Eyes Wide Open Minnesota* at the State Capitol Rotunda — exhibiting a pair of boots for every U.S. soldier and

a pair of shoes for every Iraqi civilian killed. More at www.mppeace.org.

March 31: Author/humorist Christopher Moore (of *Lamb: the Gospel According to Christ's Childhood* Pal, Biff fame — have you read this book yet?) reads from his new work, *You Suck: A Love Story* at the Har Mar Barnes & Noble. Free, 3 p.m.

Through April 1: During the last half of the 19th century, a quarter of a million orphans were shipped from the East Coast to the Midwest with one change of clothes and a Bible. The new musical *Orphan Train*, playing at the History Theatre, brings the question of how to sing one's song in a foreign land to our backdoor. Cost is \$20-27, 8 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays.

April 7: Queen of alt-country and princess of funny Neko Case plays First Avenue tonight. Wealth indeed! Also, I'm not smarter than Colin or Jesse.

April 10: Anne Lamott speaks at the Galleria Barnes & Noble in Edina. Her new collection of essays, *Grace (Eventually): Thoughts on Faith*, in the tradition of *Traveling Mercies* and *Plan B*, comes out in March

Family Events:

Through May 13: As parents, you know a bit about motion. Take your little movers to the Minnesota Children's Museum for the *Raceways* exhibit (they'll learn about all the things you can't remember from high school physics). Also, it is the museum's 25th year — to celebrate, an exhibit called 25 Days of Fun runs through March 25. Visit www.mcm.org for more info.

March 17: The St. Patrick's Day Parade in downtown St. Paul starts at noon. From there, proceed to **Minnesota Public Radio's A St. Patrick's Day Children's Matinee:** Irish storytellers, puppeteers, live music and "visual shenanigans" are promised at the Fitzgerald Theater; 2 p.m., \$10. Visit fitzgeraldtheater.publicradio.org for tickets.

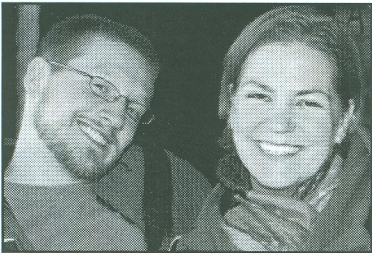
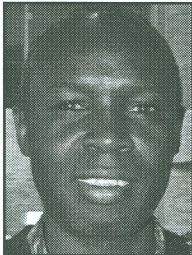
► The Children's Theatre Company is running two great shows this month: *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (through April 7) and *The Lost Boys of Sudan* (March 27-April 22). More info at www.childrenstheatre.org.

The Concord asks ...

How did you spend the snow days on March 1 and 2?

"I studied. I shared things about my country (Kenya) with other students."

- Bernard Sande
M.A. junior



"I took care of him because he was sick."

- Arianna Arends
with Dave Arends
Newlywed M.Div. middlers

"We buit a five-snowball-high snowman in front of House 18. He was over 10 feet tall. Then he face-planted."

- Shannyn Magee
M.Div. junior



"I drove to work."

- Joe Su
M.Div. junior

"We just stayed in cozily together. We had a lovely time speaking and praying and just enjoying each other after all these years."

- Bill Smith
Professor emeritus of pastoral care



"Oh, he makes it sound so nice!"

- Anita Smith
his wife of 60 years



"I shut the Mailroom down early so I could watch YouTube in peace."

- Stew Carlson*
M.Div. senior

*The views of Stew Carlson do not necessarily reflect views of the Concord or Luther Seminary

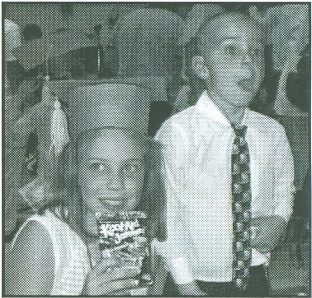
Down the Hill

Luther Seminary
through younger eyes

The Greatest and Worst things about living in Sandgren Hall

By Amanda
and Aidan Speirs

Children of Bob and Terri Speirs



GREATEST

1. In the winter, all your friends are in the building! So you don't have to drive to get there.
2. When Duane (the apartment manager) is not here, we rollerblade with Patrick Patterson, at least in the summer. =)
3. Play foursquare in the hallways in weekends.
4. You can run around without leaving the building (there are a lot of places to run around).
5. When you get bored, you always can go to the basement and play cool games.
6. You can also play in the activity room (but first somebody needs to pick it up because it's a mess).
7. You can play tag or hide-and-go-seek because it's a big place where you can run. But it's cool because when you are walking on a floor, you can't run because people can hear you pounding on the floor like elephants running across the hall!
8. You meet people from different countries.
9. You get to try new food.
10. You have the biggest, nicest backyard you could ever imagine.

WORST

1. Your annoying siblings can have a friend who is a brother or sister to your friend.
2. Duane has to make up rules that are not kid-friendly, like no four-legged animals in the apartments, NO BALLS, no talking really loud and a lot of other annoying stuff.
3. We can't really be out in the halls after 8:00.
4. Recently, a lot of construction has been going on.
5. When it snows, they plow the sidewalks when kids like playing in that snow — no one thinks of that.
6. When you really want to go somewhere but you can't get out of your parking spot because there is so much snow.
7. They don't clean the playground, and you never know if some little kid peed on it.
8. They don't have a drinking fountain outside because, I mean, who is ever going to bring a water bottle out side without forgetting it there?
9. The woods. It bothers me so much because all these strange wild animals can pop out any time and attack you. Also there are strangers there that could kidnap you.
10. When your parents tell you to come in when you don't want to.